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A Response to Watergate-Era Authors

Three refugees from the Watergate era—G. Gordon Liddy, John Ehrlichman and Spiro Agnew—have been promoting their latest books on TV talk shows to my discomfort.

The incomprehensible Liddy has cordially confessed that he had plotted my liquidation. He called this "justifiable homicide" because my reporting supposedly had resulted in the soviet detection and torture of a CIA undercover agent.

Ehrlichman allowed that he would not have been a party to anything so base as putting out my lights forever, but he confirmed gravely that my reporting had exposed not a CIA agent in Russia but a CIA informant in India.

Agnew merely implied that my elimination would have been a desideratum that would have added to the sum of human happiness. But when he was asked why he had allowed the Food Fair supermarket chain to stock his pantry with free food while he was vice president, he explained it on the grounds that I, too, had received free groceries from Food Fair.

May I be permitted a brief response? Ehrlichman alluded to my India-Pakistan stories, detailing the administration bias toward Pakistan, which were published before Christmas 1971. Yet Nixon waited until the following February to unleash his watchdogs on me. This coincided with my investigation of the ITT scandal, which badly embarrassed Nixon. I reported an incriminating memo written by ITT lobbyist Dita Beard. I also reported that Nixon had received two secret cash contributions of \$50,000 each from industrialist Howard Hughes.

Embarrassments such as these, not the exposing of some unnamed CIA informant, infuriated Nixon. Ex-White House

aide Charles Colson has testified that he was asked "many times" by President Nixon to take action "to discredit Jack Anderson."

To this end, the CIA assigned 18 radio cars to keep my operation under surveillance. The Pentagon, according to its former security chief W. Donald Stewart, conducted at least 11 investigations of me, sparing no expense. The FBI secretly grabbed my telephone records, and the Internal Revenue Service conducted a penetrating, year-long audit of my finances.

This should have been intimidation enough that someone in the White House didn't like me, but I never dreamed my popularity had fallen so low that Liddy would seek to do me in. He got his motivation, whether by osmosis or otherwise, from Richard Nixon, who was concerned about his own fate, not some CIA informant's.

As for Spiro Agnew, I have a sporting proposition. If he can prove that I received free food deliveries from Food Fair as he did, I'll keep him supplied with food for a year. But if he can't prove it, then he should pay my grocery bills for a year. Fair enough, Spiro?

Memo to the Pentagon—Most Americans are willing to spend whatever it takes to keep the United States strong enough to safeguard the national security. They don't begrudge the Pentagon its growing share of the tax dollar, as long as the money is spent efficiently.

But there are too many generals and admirals who act like small boys let loose in a toy store with a rich uncle's credit card. These profligate brasshats lavish the taxpayers' money on fancy

gadgets that subtract from a weapon's efficiency as they add to its cost.

A typical example is the Army's XM1 tank. This super-sophisticated, super-expensive battlewagon is equipped with every gimmick the designers could dream up. Unfortunately, such forgotten basics as the turbine engine, hydraulic system and fuel lines keep breaking down.

Recent tests at Fort Knox, for example, showed that the tanks could go only 140 to 169 miles on a tank of gas, instead of the 275 to 375 miles required. Air filters, necessary to keep dust from clogging the finicky turbine engines, had to be changed every 75 to 100 miles.

The Pentagon has pooh-poohed these problems and has authorized the Chrysler Corp. to increase its production this year from 110 to 352, at about \$1 million per copy. And there are no rebates for the taxpayers.

Persian Drug—Central Intelligence Agency analysts estimate that Iran now produces 60 times as much heroin as Mexico. According to intelligence briefings, the "Silver Crescent" of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan now exports at least 10 times as much heroin as the notorious "Golden Triangle" of Vietnam, Thailand and Burma.

Senior Partner—For the past few years, the United States and Japan have been cooperating on energy projects of mutual benefit. But Uncle Sam seems to be doing most of the cooperating. Recently, for example, U.S. and Japanese scientists embarked on a joint venture in high-energy physics. The Japanese government will contribute about \$5.7 million for 1980. The American share is \$326 million.